

Remarks

The various parts of the Office Action are discussed below under similar headings.

Specification

The specification has been amended as suggested by the Examiner. The Examiner's suggested changes are appreciated.

Claim Objections

Claim 6 has been amended to clarify the phrase noted by the Examiner.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

Claims 1 has been amended to remove the term "highly" and to recite an "abrasive substance" whereby antecedent basis now exists for "the abrasive substance" in claim 5, thereby rendering moot two of the three objections raised by the Examiner. Regarding the phrase "the final area density", area density is a well known term of art. See, for example, the attached web page where such term is used. If further explanation is needed, please advise.

Withdrawal of the 35 USC 112 rejection is requested.

Before discussing the prior art rejections, it is noted that other amendments have been made in the claims. For instance, the terms "decorative" and "special" have been deleted from the claims, it being submitted that the absence of these terms does not negate the patentability of the claims. Also, claim 2 has been amended to improve the form thereof.

In addition, dependent claims 8-11 have been added for examination.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

In claim 1, the spraying step has been amended to recite "spraying onto said damped wet paper an additional layer of amino resin in a dispersion containing an abrasive substance". JP 07001414 neither discloses nor suggests spraying as noted by the Examiner. Moreover, JP 07001414 neither discloses nor suggests a dispersion containing an abrasive substance. In JP 07001414, the zeolite particles of 1 μm with adhered Ag ion are antibacterial particles and not abrasive particles. See the attached web page relating to grit sizes of abrasive materials.

In addition, the skilled person would not consider JP 07001414 in connection with the manufacture of a paper for the production of a wear-resistant laminate flooring material, nor does the Japanese reference refer to the problems which are solved by the present invention.

Regarding Fisher et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,231,670, this patent does not qualify as prior art. This patent issued from an application that was filed in the United States on January 14, 2000, which is after the filing date of the PCT application on which the present application is based. Accordingly, the prior art rejections are improper for this additional reason.

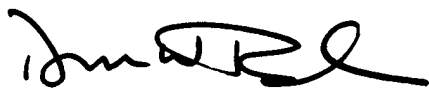
The other applied references do not overcome the deficiencies of the above-discussed references as teaching references vis-a-vis the claims, and thus no comment thereon is believed necessary.

Conclusion

Allowance of the application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING (37 CFR 1.8a)

I hereby certify that this paper (along with any paper referred to as being attached or enclosed) is being deposited with the United States Postal Service on the date shown below with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, United States Patent and Trademark Office, Washington, D.C. 20231.

Date: June 24, 2002


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